

STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: February 18, 2004

Agenda Item 8

TO: LAFCO Commissioners

FROM: Everett Millais, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the El Rio Forebay Groundwater Contaminant Elimination Project

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the Chair to send a letter of support to Sue Hughes, CEO Legislative Analyst in support of the El Rio Forebay Groundwater Contaminant Elimination Project.

DISCUSSION:

The Oxnard Forebay is a groundwater basin along the lower Santa Clara River that includes the RiverPark project area recently annexed to the City of Oxnard and the unincorporated communities of Saticoy and El Rio. The Regional Water Quality Control Board has issued regulations requiring that all septic systems be removed from the Oxnard Forebay by 2008 in order to protect groundwater resources.

Areas along the westerly side of Vineyard Avenue have been or will be connected to the City of Oxnard's sanitary sewer system. The Saticoy Sanitary District expanded its boundaries, collection system and treatment plant to accommodate that area of the Forebay. The El Rio community, however, lacks the necessary infrastructure for the Regional Water Quality Control Board mandate to be easily met.

The County of Ventura has taken the lead with its El Rio Forebay Groundwater Contaminant Elimination Project. This project will include the construction of a sanitary sewer collection system for El Rio. While there are potentially several governmental structure options for serving El Rio with wastewater services (any of which will involve some form of action by LAFCO), the first critical step is to secure state and federal funding for the project. Most affected local agencies have written letters in support of the project and the County's efforts to secure necessary funding. A support letter from LAFCO has been requested and is recommended.

COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

COUNTY: Kathy Long Linda Parks <i>Alternate:</i> Steve Bennett	CITY: Evaristo Barajas John Zaragoza, Vice Chair <i>Alternate:</i> Don Waunch	SPECIAL DISTRICT: Jack Curtis Dick Richardson <i>Alternate:</i> Ted Grandsen	PUBLIC: Louis Cunningham, Chair <i>Alternate:</i> Kenneth M. Hess
EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Everett Millais	SENIOR PLANNER: Hollie Brunsky	CLERK: Debbie Schubert	LEGAL COUNSEL: Noel Klebaum



February 18, 2004

Sue Hughes
Ventura County CEO Governmental Affairs
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-1940

RE: El Rio Forebay Groundwater Contaminant Elimination Project

Dear Ms. Hughes:

The Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission has unanimously authorized me to send this letter in support of the Ventura County Watershed Protection District's and the County of Ventura's efforts to seek direct Federal financial assistance for the El Rio Forebay Groundwater Contaminant Elimination Project. The Ventura LAFCO understands the unique nature of the Oxnard Plain Forebay Basin, and we support the Ventura County Watershed Protection District's watershed planning approach to eliminate wastewater discharge from the El Rio neighborhood septic systems.

Among other responsibilities, the State legislature has charged LAFCOs with the responsibility of promoting orderly growth and development. As such, the provision of basic services, such as safe drinking water and viable sanitary sewer systems, is vital for the health, safety and general welfare of existing communities. LAFCO supports the County's efforts to work with the State and Federal legislatures to make implementation of the El Rio Forebay Groundwater Contaminant Elimination Project affordable.

The Ventura LAFCO looks forward to continuing to work with the County to protect our environment and facilitate the upgrading of services to existing communities.

Sincerely,

Louis Cunningham, Chair
Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission

cc: Jeff Pratt, Director, Ventura County Watershed Protection District